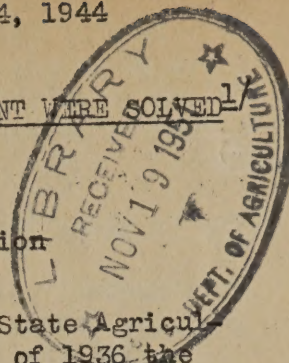


September 14, 1944

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HOW TWO IMPORTANT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF HINESBURG TOWNSHIP VERMONT WERE SOLVED

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As early as 1936 the Vermont people, under the leadership of the State Agricultural College, began considering their land problem. In the fall of 1936 the State Extension Service and Experiment Station established County Agricultural Policy Committees in all of the 14 counties to consider classifying land areas of the counties into divisions, based on their best use. Preliminary to these discussion meetings, the State Experiment Station with the help of the county agent roughed out a "land classification" map. The maps developed by these county committees were consolidated into a State Land Classification Map which has been very useful in developing State and county highway systems, farm-to-market road programs, electrical service to rural areas, township school programs and perhaps most important of all, as a guide for potential farm purchasers.

Land Use Planning is Introduced

County Agricultural Policy Committees were continued as discussion groups until agricultural planning (Land Use Planning) was formally organized in the fall of 1938. With the advent of the formal program a State Committee was developed and one county (Chittenden) was designated as an intensive county.

The State Committee was made up of the chairmen of each of the county committees with six members appointed by the chairman (State Extension Director). The appointment of these 6 members made it possible to round out the committee to represent the agriculture and the people of the State.

Vermont's People

Almost all of the people of Vermont are of native stock with a scattering of French Canadians in the counties bordering Canada. To my knowledge there is only one negro farmer in the State. Catholics, Protestants, and atheists are all found in Vermont. There are very good farmers, and extremely poor farmers. There are farmers who live on good roads and have electricity, and all the public services available to human beings, and there are farmers who live under very primitive conditions. All of these were represented on the township committees, and it might be said that all were represented on the county and State committees because of the system used to establish these committees.

Chittenden County an Intensive County

In the intensive county (Chittenden), township committees were organized in each of the townships. The township committee consisted of all who were interested

- 1/ One of a series of case histories prepared for use in the Conference to Outline the Contribution of Extension Methods and Techniques Toward the Rehabilitation of War-Torn Countries, held in Wash. D.C., September 19 to 22, 1944, Extension Service and Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations cooperating.

in attending the committee meetings. In general these meetings were attended by about 20 people. The members of the township committee selected an individual to represent them on the county agricultural planning committee. So as counties in the State became intensive counties, the democratic system was carried through to the State Committee.

The Problems in Hinesburg Township

In Hinesburg, one of the 17 townships in Chittenden County, the committee met with the county agent to discuss their problems. It wasn't long until they had discovered their two most pressing problems. First, the fact that the LaPlatte River had silted in, and was holding back the run off water, destroying about 900 acres of the most valuable crop land in the township. This meant the abandonment of farms or unprofitable farming, impossibility of collecting taxes, and the deterioration of the township in general. The township committee explored ways of solving this problem. First, they contacted the Soil Conservation Service and solicited their help. Since the law under which this agency operated would not permit them to perform this service, a large chemical company was asked to blast a ditch through the area. The company agreed to put on a demonstration if the farmers would pay for the materials used. The township committee then appointed a subcommittee to visit each farm owner affected, to have him sign an agreement to contribute at the rate of \$3.00 per crop acre drained on his farm. Some blasting was done, but about this time the State passed an enabling act making it possible to set up Soil Conservation Districts. The township became part of a district and the Soil Conservation Service took over the task of dredging a ditch two and one-half miles long through the area. About 336 acres of crop land will benefit directly, and 236 acres will benefit indirectly from the drainage project. Farm owners are paying \$10.00 per acre for each of the 336 acres and \$3.00 per acre for each of the 236 acres to have the work done.

People on Sub-Marginal Farms

The second problem facing Hinesburg township was the expense of maintaining roads, schools, and other public services to residents in the land Classes III and IV (the poorer farming sections). Many of the properties in these areas were tax delinquent. The township Agricultural Planning Committee organized a program whereby the town would take over the ownership of these properties and establish town forests on them. The committee presented their organized program to the annual township meeting, and secured the necessary legal clearance for the township to carry out the program. By special arrangement, the United States Department of Agriculture through the agricultural conservation program paid the township a nominal sum for setting out the trees. Most of the farms taken over were owned by the residents. These people have left these sub-marginal areas, and are now employed in industry, or are on farms in the valleys. They are making a much greater contribution to our national welfare and are maintaining a much higher standard of living for themselves at no expense to the township, than they could have on the sub-marginal farms. This fall the Agricultural Experiment Station will study this area to determine where these people have gone.

The two examples indicate how one township through an organization sponsored by the educational institutions in the State outlined and overcame their most serious problems -- problems which might possibly have meant bankruptcy to the township as well as to the individuals involved.